

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

ANNEX

Town of Los Altos Hills

Introduction

The Town of Los Altos Hills is a small-sized city in Santa Clara County, California. The Town has a population of 7,900 people, based on the 2000 census¹. Last year, the Town's all-Funds budget was \$6,870,000. The Town employs 22 people. The Town contracts for police services; fire services and paramedics are provided by Santa Clara County Fire Department.

The Planning Process

The Town has a Safety Element to its General Plan last updated in 1994 that includes a discussion of fire, earthquake, flooding, and landslide hazards. In addition, the Town routinely enforces the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements (which, since 1988, have required mitigation for identified natural hazards). The Town's effort has focused on building on these pre-existing programs and identifying gaps that may lead to disaster vulnerabilities in order to work on ways to address these risks through mitigation.

Many of the activities conducted by the Town were fed into the planning process for the multi-jurisdictional plan. The Town participated in various ABAG workshops and meetings, including the general "kick-off" meeting. In addition, the Town has provided written and oral comments on the multi-jurisdictional plan. Finally, the Town provided information on facilities in Los Altos Hills that are viewed as "critical" to ABAG.

Key Town staff met on two occasions to identify and prioritize mitigation strategies appropriate for the Town. Staff involved in these meetings included the Senior Planner, Associate City Engineer and Assistant City Engineer. At the first meeting, the general priorities and appropriate Town departments were identified. The second meeting identified preliminary budgets and potential funding sources for strategies designed as "High" priority. The Town provided the opportunity for the public to comment on the DRAFT mitigation strategies selected by Town staff at the City Council meeting on October 6, 2005. The resolution adopting the plan and strategies was adopted by the City Council on February 9, 2006. The mitigation strategies will become an implementation appendix to this Safety Element.

Hazard and Risk Assessment

The ABAG multi-jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, to which this is an Annex, lists nine hazards that impact the Bay Area, five related to earthquakes (faulting, shaking, earthquake-induced landslides, liquefaction and tsunamis) and four related to weather (flooding, landslides, wildfires and drought). These hazards also impact this community, except tsunamis. The Town of Los Altos Hills is located 15 miles inland.

¹ For complete Census information on this city, see <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/>.

In addition to the general hazard mapping undertaken by the Town since the last revision of the Safety Element, Town staff made use of the detailed and current maps available on the ABAG website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/>.

Information on disasters declared in Santa Clara County is at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/disaster-history.html>.

The Town examined the hazard exposure of City urban land based on the information on ABAG's website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickdbh2.html>. Of the 5,376 urban acres in the Town,

- Three active faults, Monte Vista, Altamont and Berrocal Fault fracture the western half of the Town.
- 26 acres are in areas of existing landslides;
- 288 acres are in areas of moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility;
- 140 acres are in the 100-year flood plain.
- 757 acres are subject to high, very high, or extreme wildfire threat (because of the rural nature of the Town).
- All 5376 acres are in wildland-urban interface threat areas.
- All 5376 acres are in the highest categories of shaking potential.

The Town also examined the hazard exposure of infrastructure based on the information on ABAG's website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickdbh2.html>. Of the 210 miles of roadway in the Town,

- 3 miles of roadway are in the 100-year flood plain, while an additional one mile is in other flood-prone areas;
- 181 miles of roads are in areas of few existing landslides;
- 17 miles of roadway are in areas of moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility;
- 210 miles of roadway are in the highest two categories of shaking potential;
- 25 miles of roadway are subject to high, very high, or extreme wildfire threat,
- All roads are in wildland-urban interface threat areas.

Finally, the Town examined the hazard exposure of critical Town-owned buildings based on the information on ABAG's website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickcrit.html>. Of the critical facilities in the Town,

- No Town-owned facilities are in the 100-year flood plain or in other flood-prone areas;
- No Town-owned facilities are in areas of existing landslides;
- No critical Town-owned facilities are in areas of moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility;
- Town Hall is in the highest two categories of shaking potential;
- The Town's Emergency Operations Center is in the highest two categories of shaking potential;
- The Town's Corporation Yard is in the highest two categories of shaking potential
- All Town-owned critical facilities are located in the wildland-urban interface threat areas.

In spite of the areas of the Town located in shake potential areas and wildland-urban threat areas, there are no repetitive loss properties in the Town based on the information at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickflood.html>.

The newly constructed Town Hall conforms to mandated Building Codes required to mitigate damage as a result of seismic events and fire. However, the Town's Emergency Operations Center and Corporation Yard, both critical facilities, are in need of seismic retrofitting and fire sprinkler systems. The Town has 3 active faults that fracture the western half of the Town. Both facilities are located within a half mile of these faults and are in the highest categories of shake potential and wildland-urban interface threat areas.

The Town has reviewed and ranked the identified hazards based on past disasters and expected future events. The conclusion is that earthquakes (particularly shaking) and fires in the wildland-urban interface areas are more of a threat than other hazards. The Town's concern regarding earthquakes and fire will be reflected in the anticipated Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant submittals for the seismic retrofitting and installation of fire sprinkler systems at the Town's critical facilities.

Mitigation Activities and Priorities

As a participant in the ABAG multi-jurisdictional planning process, Town staff helped in the development and review of the comprehensive list of mitigation strategies in the overall multi-jurisdictional plan. The list was discussed at a meeting of the Senior Planner, Assistant City Engineer and Associate City Engineer on June 16, 2005. At the meeting, all of the mitigation strategies were reviewed. The tentative decision on priority was made based on a variety of criteria, not simply on an economic cost-benefit analysis. These criteria include being technically and administratively feasible, politically acceptable, socially appropriate, legal, economically sound, and not harmful to the environment or the Town's heritage.

Over time, the Town is committed to developing better hazard and risk information to use in making those trade-offs. The Town is not trying to create a disaster-proof region, but a disaster-resistant one. In addition, many of the strategies are existing Town programs that are already a part of the planning process through plan and project review, building and fire code enforcement, and development of the Town's General Plan. New activities, either identified as part of this Annex or those not yet considered, will be incorporated into these existing mechanisms. Some activities will require funds which are not yet identified. However, as such activities are adopted, the Town will work to identify potential funding sources including capital improvement budgets, bond issues, and federal grants and state grants.

These draft priorities were submitted to the City Manager for review. The draft priorities will be submitted to City Council for adoption on February 9, 2006. The public was provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft opportunities. The final strategies (as shown in the attached Table) will become an Implementation to the Town's Safety Element.

In addition, the Town examined the hazard exposure information to Town-owned critical facilities supplied by ABAG. As mentioned in the Hazard and Risk Assessment section of this Annex, the Town has determined that the construction type, age, fire threat and shaking exposure

of the Town's Emergency Operations Center and Corporation Yard is significant. Therefore, the Town will apply for a Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant to retrofit these critical facilities.

The Plan Update Process

The Town of Los Altos Hills is committed to reviewing and updating this plan annex at least once every five years, as required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The Town Planning Director will contact ABAG four years after this plan is approved to ensure that ABAG plans to undertake the plan update process. If so, the Town again plans to participate in the multi-jurisdictional plan. If ABAG is unwilling or unable to act as the lead agency in the multi-jurisdictional effort, other agencies will be contacted, including the County's Office of Emergency Services. Counties should then work together to identify another regional forum for developing a multi-jurisdictional plan.

To support this commitment, the Town's emergency management will ensure that monitoring of this Annex occurs on an on-going basis. Triggers for changes to this Annex will include disasters affecting the Town, legal changes, notices from ABAG as the lead agency in this process, and other inputs as may occur. Review of the Annex will be an agenda item at the Emergency Preparedness Committee meetings each winter. At that meeting, the Annex will be evaluated in light of political and technological changes during the past year or other significant events. The City Manager will be responsible for determining if the Annex should be updated.

Updates to the Annex will be available for public review at Town Hall following publication of a notice. All public comments will be considered and publicly initiated changes will be integrated into the Annex whenever reasonable and appropriate.